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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the opportunities of combining teaching, research, and service and highlights the inherent challenges of such an approach. By offering evidence on how professors at small liberal arts colleges can combine their research, teaching, and service responsibilities in ways that enrich student learning, the paper takes a role in helping to improve undergraduate education and engaging the outside community with the college. It is common to overstate the opportunities for, and limits of combining teaching, research, and service. A common misperception of those considering teaching at small liberal arts colleges is that they need to sacrifice their research agendas to meet teaching and service expectations. Successful strategies exist to meaningfully combine faculty research, teaching, and service while promoting liberal arts education. However, the applicability of these approaches are structurally dependent. Methodologically qualitative, personal experience, and surveys are supplemented with interviews of students, faculty, college administrators (Muskingum College, New Concord, Ohio), and city officials (Zanesville, Ohio). Appended are three sets of targeted interview questions. (Contains 34 references.) (Author/BT)

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Connecting the Dots of the Academic Triangle: Combining Teaching, Research, and Service in Meaningful Ways

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Abstract

This paper examines the opportunities of combining teaching, research, and service and highlights the inherent challenges of such an approach. By offering evidence on how professors at small liberal arts colleges can combine their research, teaching, and service responsibilities in ways that enrich student learning, this paper fills a role in helping to improve undergraduate education and engaging the outside community with the college. It is common to overstate both the opportunities for, and limits of combining teaching, research, and service. A common misperception of those considering teaching at small liberal arts colleges is that they need to sacrifice their research agendas to meet teaching and service expectations. Successful strategies exist to meaningfully combine faculty research, teaching and service while promoting liberal arts education. However, the applicability of these approaches are structurally dependent. Methodologically qualitative, personal experience, and surveys are supplemented with interviews of students, faculty, college administrators, and city officials.

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This paper examines the opportunities of combining teaching, research, and service in a meaningful fashion and highlights the inherent challenges of such an approach. By offering an assessment of how professors at small liberal arts colleges can combine their research, teaching, and service responsibilities in ways that enrich student learning, this paper seeks to help improve undergraduate education and provide faculty with proven techniques to better engage the college with the outside community. The existence of pedagogical techniques to combine teaching with research and service are well documented. What is lacking is systematic evaluation of these efforts. Student evaluations, comments from peers, and statements from administrators can help faculty assess the effectiveness of individual courses they have taught. However, without a fairly high level of rigor, these self-evaluations can unintentionally hide or gloss over limits to such an approach.

This paper represents an attempt to realistically assess the strengths and inherent weaknesses of combining the three sides of the academic triangle. It is the contention of the authors that although there are variations caused by institutional cultures, meaningful generalizations can be drawn and successful pedagogical techniques can be replicated so long as structural characteristics are controlled for and examined. The advantages for faculty, students, and institutions such approaches offer are real. This paper focuses not only on the utility of combining research, service, and teaching, but the limits and weaknesses inherent in approaching teaching in this fashion.

It is common to overstate both the opportunities for, and limits of combining teaching with research and service. A common misconception of those considering teaching at small liberal arts colleges is that they need to sacrifice their research agendas to meet teaching and service expectations. Successful strategies do exist to meaningfully combine faculty research, teaching and service while

promoting liberal arts education. However, these techniques are often less successful than anticipated due to the structural constraints of specific institutions. To address this flaw, this paper outlines not only the approach used, but also what made it successful. Methodologically qualitative, personal experience, and surveys are supplemented with in-depth interviews of students, members of the college administration, and city officials.

Introduction

Institutions of higher education increasingly find themselves in the unenviable position of having to meet ever-increasing demands with stagnant, or in some cases, declining resources. Although this situation creates new challenges for all aspects of higher education, the effects are often most dramatically felt in the classroom. Currently, many colleges experience increased demands from a progressively diverse student body. Colleges and universities must adapt to a situation where the entry-level of education for new students is dropping while budgets remain stagnant or in some cases decline. Barr and Tagg (1995) argue that in such a situation, there is a compelling need to overhaul the traditional teaching paradigm if teaching institutions are to continue to produce quality results.

Strain on the traditional teaching paradigms is further exacerbated by the increasing demands placed on faculty members. Many teachers face more students in their introductory classes, more classes to teach, more preparations each year, more service commitments, and the like along with an increasingly diverse student body. The current trend to "do more with less" does not seem likely to abate anytime soon. This makes the need for changes in the traditional teaching paradigm not only a positive for the students, but a necessary tactic for faculty seeking to cope with increasing workloads.

By examining one such approach in depth, student/faculty collaborative learning experiences, the authors hope to contribute to this emerging concern in higher education. Research in this area has produced an abundance of evidence on various pedagogical teaching techniques but tends to neglect analyzing the limits of various approaches. Although all colleges and universities share certain fundamental characteristics, each institution of higher learning is unique. By looking not only at the relative success of experiential classroom learning at Muskingum College but the structural factors that helped (and hindered) its success, generalized advice on the technique can be given and faculty seeking to employ it can have a more realistic picture of the strategic opportunities they should employ and the pitfalls that must be avoided.

The remainder of the paper is broken as follows: A brief review of the literature on learning is presented to inform the reader of what is already known about the success of various teaching techniques and how this work fits into structural constraints of employing various teaching pedagogies. The experiential learning class "Regional Planning" is examined in some depth, with an eye toward explaining what made the class successful, along with mistakes that could have been avoided. Examining the transcripts from in-depth phone interviews with past and present students who have completed the class provides an analysis of the class as a learning experience for students. This discussion is supplemented with evidence derived from interviews with the President of the College and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The extent to which these types of experiential learning classes provide meaningful service to the community is explored, with the discussion based on evidence derived from interviews with the Mayor, the Director of Public Service, and the Director of Community Development of Zanesville, Ohio. A discussion of the structural characteristics that enhanced this, and

by inference, other similar courses are provided. Finally, an examination of the research implications of this class, and more importantly, similar types of classes, is given.

Literature Review

The primary goal of this section is to examine the ways traditional and experiential pedagogical techniques function. More peripherally this section establishes that the experiential learning class examined in this paper is well established in the literature on learning involving undergraduate classrooms in civic environments, specifically working with local government on civic projects. This section delineates and expatiates on the literature pertaining to the research in this paper. It is divided into to four parts: (1) institutional support of scholarship versus teaching, (2) student motivation to learn in various academic settings, (3) which pedagogical techniques are most effective in the classroom, and (4) student involvement in community issues and projects.

Institutional Support

There is an inherent link between student motivation and student learning. In 1995 Robert Barr and John Tagg authored an article in New Directions for Teaching and Learning that examined the current status of higher education. They concluded that the student body at most colleges is becoming more diverse, both ethnically and with the level of education upon entrance to the university. Related to the above, they also found that most budgets in higher education are not increasing proportionally with new demands. The fear they have expressed is that the quality of education a student receives during their college careers will erode, unless those who teach in higher education diverge from the traditional method of student learning evaluation, which the authors call the "Instruction Paradigm." The instruction

paradigm, simply put according to Barr and Tagg, is most colleges and universities seem to be measuring the wrong outcomes for student success. The measures currently in place at most colleges do not reflect real learning on the student's part. The implications of this are quite large. If the measure of student success is not learning then it would appear unlikely that either faculty or administrations appear to be responsible for student learning. The Instructional paradigm, therefore, places all the responsibility for learning with the student. Barr and Tagg call for a change from the Instructional Paradigm to the Learning Paradigm. This new paradigm calls for faculty responsibility for student learning. The authors focus on three agents of change. First, they suggest changing the way we assess students in order to attain a better understanding of student learning.

> Our faculty evaluation systems, for example, evaluate the performance of faculty in teaching terms, not learning terms. An instructor is typically evaluated in by her peers or dean on the basis of whether or her lectures were organized, whether she covers the appropriate material, whether she respects her students= questions and comments. All of these factors evaluate the instructor's performance in teaching terms. They do no raise the issue of whether students are learning, let alone demand evidence of learning or provide for its reward. (Barr and Tagg, 1995, 5)

Second, Barr and Tagg argue that administrators need to hold teachers responsible for their students learning in a more positive fashion. Evidence that student learning is not taking place in the classroom used in a punitive fashion by administrators causes those who teach to have an incentive to gather data that supports the contention that they have induced learning in their students. If, on the other hand, evidence that learning is not taking place in the classroom is viewed merely as data to support change towards more effective teaching models, instructors are more likely to seek accurate measures of student learning. Third, the authors call for change from those who fund colleges (e.g., the state). Barr and Tagg suggest that the emphasis states place on producing college graduates is

counterproductive to the more important goal of producing effective learners.

In a 1994 article "Knowledge ethics and the new academic culture" published in *Change*, Kerr and Clark identify two reasons institutions diverged from focusing on classroom instruction:

> Academic institutions themselves have added to these directions of movement in at least two ways. Their reward structures give more credit for published research and external recognition than to teaching and contributions to internal governance. Also, more and more of internal governance is being taken over by larger and larger administrative staff, thus reducing the sense of the academy=s being a self-governed community (9-10).

This article serves to impress the responsibility of governance amongst each faculty member, thus resolving the problem of hyperbolizing emphasis on research and under emphasizing teaching and service. Kerr and Clark argue that decreases in faculty governance create structural barriers to meaningful change in the classroom.

Successfully altering the learning experience of students requires more than innovative teaching techniques. Institutional support provides is a necessary precondition for success. One often overlooked reason why success in the classroom is not always transferable to other faculty teaching at different colleges is the variety of institutional mechanisms in place. Although this limits the degree to which studies that seek to document and analyze the effectiveness of various teaching pedagogies can be generalized, it is essential that the reader understand that different institutional frameworks will encourage different types of teaching. Whether the level of success achieved with experiential learning can be replicated at a different institution depends, in large part, on the institutional support available there.

Student Motivation

Wilbert McKeachie writes in *Tips for Teaching* that at a 1961 Nebraska Symposium he

argued that students would assess "the potential rewards and punishments and their probabilities of attainment in all of these situations" (116). In every academic situation, a student=s motivation will fluctuate according to their perception of their ability, the classroom setting, the student=s peers, their involvement in other classes, a student=s involvement in extracurricular activities, and the like. While the suggestion that students are affected by reward structures does not appear groundbreaking, the implications are. McKeachie=s work implies that student motivation can vary based upon the academic setting, size and structure of the course. Others to show that educators can, to a limited degree, control both the motivation of students and the level of learning a student gains have used his work. (Pintrich, Brown, and Weinstein, 1994)

Student motivation is, at a minimum, partially controllable by teachers. The success of a course is dependent in part on how it is structured. The structure of a course does not however take place in a vacuum, nor is the identical structure likely to achieve the same results across institutions of higher education. The types of students taking the class, their outside interests, peer groups, extracurricular activities, et. al., will all impact the utility of the course structure. Anecdotally, faculty who teach multiple sections of the same course in a given semester often experience different levels of classroom success with each section. Part of the cause of this phenomenon is often the different reward structures of the students.

This does not however mean that all course structures are equally likely to achieve student learning. The reality is quite the opposite. The structure of the class is an important determinant of whether students will be motivated to learn. However, an appropriate structure at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest may not achieve the same results at a large research university in the Northeast.

Understanding the types of students the institution and the classes under study attract is the first step to designing a class that will encourage student learning.

Pedagogical Techniques

There is a large body of literature available to K-12 teachers on how to improve classroom learning. However, the information available to teachers in higher education is more limited and has only come into focus recently. (Murray, 1997) Although we have no shortage of studies advocating one pedagogical technique over another, there is little comparative analysis done. Moreover, before hitching a wagon to any specific technique, it would be prudent to first ask whether any of those techniques make a difference in student performance. Murray argues that "it makes no sense to look for underlying differential teacher effectiveness if there are no differences in effectiveness to explain." (p. 173) Coleman et. al., (1966) found that only five percent of student achievement measured between schools (elementary education) could be attributed to teacher effectiveness. The other 95 percent was found to variations amongst student ability and family background. Sanders= (1986) makes a similar point, arguing that empirically, since teachers, by and large, are trained in a similar fashion, there should not be a great deal in variance in teacher effectiveness from teacher to teacher.

Both Colemans and Sanders= findings seem counter-intuitive to the authors because most individuals have had a teacher they believed was better than others in their field or have heard someone say "this teacher changed my life" or "she made me realize what it is I want to do for the rest of my life". More importantly, there is an abundance of research that disagrees with Sanders and Coleman. Murray (1997), for example, concluded that there is a correlation between some low-inference techniques and student learning as well as student instructional ratings. The importance of Murrays

research is perhaps best seen in classes that follow the traditional lecture format. This format is among the most common and salient teaching methods in higher education. Murray finds that in the lecture format, there are some low-inference techniques that do indeed correlate with student learning.

Murray=s research is encouraging, but suffers from at least two limitations. First, the correlations Murray finds between low-level inference techniques and student learning do not imply causation. "A relationship between two variables does not, and cannot, imply any causal relationship between the variables" (Chen and Popovich, 2002, p. 3). The correlations do not tell us whether good teaching produced higher learning or motivated learners produced better efforts on the instructor's part. This limit is not damning because as Chen and Popovich make clear, it is possible to make inferences as to the meaning of a correlation. Although Murray cannot 'prove' causation, he makes a compelling argument that teaching affects student learning. The second limit on Murray=s findings is more troubling but less germane to our work. Murray=s findings do not allow knowledge on the results of 'bad' teaching. Students could conceivably make the best of a bad situation and learn a great deal. Without a control group it is impossible to know.

While there is no conclusive empirical evidence that definitively illustrates better teaching is causally connected to increased student learning, the authors of this paper argue that better teaching does positively affect learning. We do not feel this point is overly controversial. The idea that better teaching will lead to a higher degree of academic interest, motivation, and performance by students is well accepted. Colleges and universities routinely give awards to teachers deemed 'effective,' most institutions of higher learning require (or at a minimum encourage) student feedback on teaching effectiveness, and tenure decisions are made, in part, on the effectiveness of a faculty member=s

classroom teaching. Along with institutions, faculty members generally appear to believe that effective teaching has a positive effect on student learning. This is illustrated by the fact that Wilbert McKeachie=s Teaching Tips is in it=s 11th edition. This paper will help fill a gap in systematic research literature as well as demonstrate an effective teaching model appropriate to similar institutions.

Student Involvement in Community Issues and Projects

Colleges and universities generally focus at least part of their attention on the development of the learner as a whole individual, preparing them to be active citizens in a community. Many colleges include it as part of the institution=s mission statement. Muskingum College, the institution the authors are affiliated with includes the following as part of the mission statement. "Its primary purpose is to develop B intellectually, spiritually, socially and physically B whole persons, by fostering critical thinking, positive action, ethical sensitivity and spiritual growth, so that they may lead vocationally productive, personally satisfying and socially responsible lives" (Muskingum College Catalog 2001-2002, p. 5).

The emphasis by colleges and universities on the important goal of helping students develop as whole persons and citizens, while noble, is especially hard to accomplish in the traditional classroom setting. Mary Ellen Brandell and Shelley Hinick (1997) argue that "it is virtually impossible to teach students what it means to be a citizen or participate in a democracy. Citizens must be involved in the process" (p. 51). Brandell and Hinick=s findings are central for those teaching in the social sciences generally and political science specifically. Ideally, all students should be familiar with the inner working of government and democracy. However, it is essential that undergraduate students who major in political science have a clear understanding of government. The American Political Science Association (APSA) recently reported changing their mission statement to include a dedication to public service.

The new statement reads in part that the APSA=s mission is "serving the public, including the disseminating research and preparing citizens to be effective citizens and political participants" (Snyder, 2002). The APSA has helped give meaning to the words by supporting efforts that help in increasing political participation in higher education.

Ramifications of the Literature

This brief review of the pertinent literature allows several conclusions. First, institutional support is a necessary, albeit insufficient precondition for meaningful student learning. The varying types of institutional support available affect successful replication of a pedagogical technique. Second, when designing a course, student motivation must be kept at the forefront at all times. Students are not a monolithic group when it comes to motivation. Motivation varies across institutions and classes and courses that succeed in motivating students to learn are designed with the culture of the student body in mind. Third, while there is not a consensus in the literature as to whether specific pedagogical techniques achieve higher rates of learning, correlations between teaching effectiveness and student learning suggest that pedagogy does influence student learning. As such, some techniques are better received than others by students.

Educators can benefit from an understanding of what makes a particular pedagogy well or poorly received by students. Finally, while colleges and universities tend to place a high value on developing students as whole persons and active citizens, the traditional classroom does not always achieve the results desired. Students learn to become citizens by being citizens. Similarly, engaging students in the outside community is the best way to teach civic engagement. Experiential learning classes help colleges fulfill this important function. Political Science is uniquely positioned to make a

long-lasting and positive contribution to the lives of students, beyond what is learned in the classroom.

One problem with incorporating citizenship-building tasks into the classroom is the amount of additional time it takes to prepare and execute. At this time there is a lack of literature on the incorporation of citizenship in the classroom while taking into account other competing demands on a college faculty members time. This paper seeks to help fill this gap by providing a model through which educators can not only meet their research, service, and teaching agendas, but provide invaluable experience for undergraduates in the role of active political participants.

The Case Study: The Regional Planning Course

Qualitative methods were employed to analyze the effectiveness of the Regional Planning course at Muskingum College in terms of teaching, research, and service. The Regional Planning course offered at Muskingum College is somewhat of a misnomer. Students who take the course for the first time must register for two three credit courses: POLS310: Regional Planning and POLS 400: Metro Politics. The class meets for three hours a day, twice a week. The POLS310 course runs for the first five to six weeks of the semester. Students read a book each week on regional planning and urban politics, write reaction papers on each assigned reading, and take turns leading the class in a two hour discussion on the days assigned reading. The POLS400 class takes up the remainder of the semester. It is at this point students take the knowledge gained from the seminar portion of the course and complete a project for a city agency. The class is purposefully limited to a small number of students. The level of the course ensures that students are at least sophomores before they can enroll. Additionally, all students must first meet with the professor before registering so they are aware of the reading load and time-

intensive nature of the second portion of the course. Students who have completed the course and desire to work on another project may do so by signing up for the POLS400: Metro Politics course without taking the POLS310: Regional Planning component again. However, students who take the course for the second time are required to come to all POLS310 class meetings, read any new books that have been rotated in, and fully participate in class presentations and discussions.

The course design is unique in several respects. When this course was created, it was believed that if a meaningful final project with real-world applications is a tangible output from the class, several things can be assumed. First, it is assumed that students want to learn and will be self-motivated to do so. The reading load is rather heavy for an undergraduate course at Muskingum College. Second, it is assumed that students are in the best position to monitor the appropriate pace of the class. Each member of the class is given permission to cancel class if they cannot complete the reading on time. Finally, it is assumed that a cooperative attitude of teamwork will come naturally to students. A student cannot lead a two-hour discussion on an assigned reading effectively if the other members of the class have not read the assigned material.

The apparent success of this course appears to be based, in large part, on the validity of these assumptions. Standard student evaluations have been extremely high for this course each time it has been offered. The workload of the course has yet to deter a student from enrolling. Not one student has ever dropped the course in the five times it has been offered. Although students have canceled at least one class each time the class was offered, students have never canceled more than two sessions. They are anxious to complete the reading portion of the course so they can begin the project. Although there has been variation in how well classes have worked as teams, the final project has always been

completed on time, and with group input and support.

Classes have completed a number of small projects and two major ones for the city of Zanesville in the past three years. The first major project completed was the Zanesville Downtown Survey funded entirely by the city. This project was worked on over a 14-month period (one summer and three academic semesters). The end result was a report given to the city of Zanesville on downtown with statistics accurate within +/- 3% with a 99% confidence interval.

The inaugural semester was spent investigating the downtown qualitatively through informal interviews with local businesspersons, customers, city officials, and CDC=s (Community Development Corporations). The summer was spent developing the survey instrument. Students who had taken the course in the previous semester worked on this over the summer. They each read two books on developing surveys and had at least four meetings with me. The involvement of the students was voluntary. They received no compensation for their time, nor did they receive academic credit for this work. The subsequent semester served to fine tune, gain city support for, and send a four-part mail survey to over 4,000 Zanesville residents. The next semester involved data entry (over 225,000 points of data), cleaning of the data, analysis, writing the report, and presenting the results to the City Council, a consortium of local businesses, and the John McIntire Library (located in downtown Zanesville).

In the spring of 2002, the Regional Planning class undertook its second major project: the decennial redistricting of the ward boundaries in Zanesville, Ohio. Since the Supreme Court Case *Baker v. Carr (1962)* that established the 'one person, one vote' principal, voting districts must be redrawn the year following the decennial census to ensure elected official represent an equal portion of the general populace. City officials offered this project to the Regional Planning class in large part

because they did not have anyone on staff to do it. The city did not have anyone working for them involved in the last decennial redistricting who was still working for the city.

Working with a faculty member in the Geology Department, the class created five maps using ArcView GIS 8.0 by ERSI, including computerized version of their original ward map, and a detailed outline of the laws concerning redistricting and the procedure followed when creating the maps in order to simplify the job the next time redistricting must be done. The results of each project were presented to the college president and the redistricting project was also presented to a subcommittee on campus relations of Board of Trustees in April. The subcommittee was impressed enough with the students to request they re-present their work to the entire Board of Trustees this coming October.

On the surface, the Regional Planning class appears to be an overall success. The city of Zanesville continues to give projects to the students, another nearby city, Cambridge, OH, has asked to be included, student evaluations are high, and the institution appears pleased with the results. Despite this, several questions remain unanswered. Student evaluations are, by their nature, not as exploratory in nature as one might hope. It is possible that the high evaluations are an artifact of something beyond the content and design of the course. The city and the college have long enjoyed a positive relationship. The reason the city continues to give projects to the class may have more to do with retaining that relationship than any tangible benefits they receive from the final projects. The support the institution gives is real. However, it is possible that while they support these types of classes, they would rather see faculty invest resources in more traditional areas of teaching, research, and service. Developing appropriate instruments to answer these questions is the subject of the next section.

Methodology

Assessment of the utility of this experiential learning class in meeting the goals of service to the community, research, and teaching was accomplished with interviews. City officials, college administrators, and students were interviewed to assess the utility of the class reaching these goals. Three officials from the city of Zanesville, Ohio were interviewed in person: Jack Fenton, the Mayor; Meg Deedrick, the Director of Community Development; and Mike Sims, the Director of Public Service. These three officials constituted the individuals who had a role in approving projects and overseeing results. These interviews were conducted on June 20, 2002 in the municipal building in Zanesville, OH. The two members of the college administration interviewed were the president of the college (Dr. Anne Steele) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (Dr. George Sims). Dr. Steele and Dr. Sims were interviewed on June 19, 2002 in their offices at Muskingum College. Six students who had taken the class when one of the major projects was undertaken were identified for interviews. One could not be reached. Three of the five student interviews were conducted in person by James Hockaday on May 8th, 9th, and 15th, 2002. Two of the student interviews were conducted via phone on May 28, 2002, and June 4, 2002. All participants gave permission to have the interview recorded. Transcripts were made of each interview.

Although information on the three aspects; teaching, research, and service, may be seen in student, administration, and city official interviews, each group was interviewed with a different set of questions. Students who had taken the class were seen as in the best position to assess the experiential learning class and compare it to more traditional classes from the perspective of student learning. They were therefore primarily asked questions relating to learning. College administrative officers set policy

and interpret the Board of Trustees directives. Although they may not be in the best position to assess the utility of research from a discipline based perspective, they are well qualified to judge whether the type of research being conducted fits with the standard goal faculty at most colleges are expected to adhere to: maintaining an active research agenda. Administrators were asked questions that dealt with the appropriateness and desirability from a college perspective of using student/faculty experiential learning experiences as vehicles for faculty research. Since the work was completed for the city of Zanesville, the city officials who oversaw and made use of the reports generated were seen as best able to judge the utility of the output for the city itself. City officials were primarily asked questions relating to the service component of the course.

The small number of participants in the study and the desire to build mid-level theory made the use of qualitative measures necessary and appropriate. The instructor of the Regional Planning course did not participate in the student interviews. Interviewed students were assigned course grades before being asked to participate in this study. All participants were also given the option not to participate in the interviews. All interviewees signed a release form and all student interviews were anonymous. Confidentiality measures were taken to protect student comments from faculty scrutiny and to help ensure students would give responses that were valid and reliable. The largest threat to validity was seen as garnering accurate and complete responses from interviewees. This was controlled for in two ways. First, the coauthor, James Hockaday conducted the student interviews. At the time this paper was written, Mr. Hockaday was a student at Muskingum College and a peer of the student interviewees. Students were assured of confidentiality and the course instructor, Walter Huber was only given access to written transcripts of the interviews that had any identifying references to the students deleted. All

students were asked an identical set of questions (see Appendix A for a list of student questions.)

Both authors conducted interviews with city officials and college administrators. Interviewees were allowed to review the transcripts of the interviews to ensure comments reported were accurate and reliable responses to the interview questions. Interviewees requested no changes to the transcripts. All three city officials were asked identical questions (see Appendix B for a list of questions asked of city officials). The president of the college and the VPAA were asked different set of questions. These questions can be found in Appendix C.

All interviews were taped and later transcribed for analysis. Average interview time for students and city officials was 30 minutes. Interviews with college administrators lasted approximately 75 minutes. The information obtained from the interviews was coded into themes and patterns identified.

Results

The two college administration interviews yielded similar responses. This also held true for the three city official interviews. Similarities among student responses occurred, but were not as pronounced as with the other two groups. In part, this appears to be an artifact of the top-down structure common among colleges and cities. The developed themes for the administration and city officials are more concrete than for the students, despite the larger number of student interviewees. The remainder of this section examines the results of the qualitative assessment. The responses of the college administration are considered first, city officials second, and student's reactions to the Regional Planning course are examined last. The interviews were assessed by category. Each group is analyzed for themes that may be generalized and have implications which will be addressed in the section

following the 'Results.'

Administration

The President and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Muskingum College were asked a series of questions in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of experiential learning classes in general and their perceived role, both at Muskingum College specifically, and at colleges generally. Given that the literature suggests institutional support affects the success level of these types of initiatives, college-level administrative aid for these initiatives was also queried. The President, Anne C. Steele, and VPAA, George Sims, of Muskingum College provided the following insights.

Both the President and VPAA actively support experiential/collaborative learning activities and see them as a valuable means for student learning. The administration does not however control the curriculum. As such, the administrations position is that it does not create nor control the type of pedagogical techniques utilized at the institution. This translates into support for experiential/collaborative techniques by indirect means. The administration has a track record of providing verbal, written, and/or monetary support to experiential/collaborative learning. A program that receives support from the administration is much more likely to succeed than one that does not. The commitment of Muskingum College administrators to collaborative/experiential learning creates a culture where it has a much higher probability of success than at institutions that do not provide this type of support.

Drs Steele and Sims have been employed at other institutions in both administrative and faculty capacities. They both came to Muskingum College with a belief in the importance of collaborative and experiential learning. Their past work has contributed to their support for these types of pedagogies, in

part, because they have been directly involved in those programs. Past success with a technique increases the likelihood of replicating the program at other institutions, or in other contexts. Dr. Steele instituted a summer fellowship program for undergraduate students to engage in collaborative research with faculty members. The program provides the student with free housing for the summer and a stipend of $2,000. Before becoming President of Muskingum College, Dr. Steele had experience with these types of programs. She had previously initiated a summer fellowship program at University of North Carolina Greensboro, and later at Chatham College. Similarly, Dr. Sims expressed his support for experiential/collaborative learning experiences by referencing past positive experiences he had with the technique. Prior to becoming the VPAA at Muskingum, Dr. Sims was involved in an undergraduate research symposium organized to resemble a conference at Belmont University. While serving as a member of the faculty at Wayland Baptist University he required students in his classes to take part in a service-learning project. He thought that employing these pedagogical techniques in the classroom added to his students' college experience in positive manner.

The results of the interviews suggest that administrative support for experiential learning may depend on prior positive experiences administrators have had with using these techniques themselves. The institution will want to replicate successful experiments in collaborative learning. However, this does not suggest that only those experiential learning techniques similar to ones used in the past will be supported. Rather, it is those types of experiences the college administration is most likely to take the lead in developing.

Benefits of Collaborative/Experiential Learning for the Institution and Student The college=s administration believes that any benefit other than student learning is peripheral when considering

whether to support an initiative or program. Reflecting on the benefits of experiential/collaborative learning, President Steele said: "I think anything that strengthens the educational program of this college makes us a stronger institution." George Sims agreed saying that "the priority is student learning." Selling the institution on an experiential/collaborative learning experience at a small liberal arts college requires that student learning be put in the forefront. However the institution does recognize that experiential/collaborative work between faculty and students can offer meaningful benefits for the institution other than student learning. These positive benefits can also influence administrative support. Administrators recognize the positive benefits that student-community interaction can bring to institution in terms of:

> strengthening relationships with community, making friends for the institution, and helping demonstrate to the community that Muskingum College is one that is concerned, involved, and engaged with the community. And anything that strengthens relationships and makes friends for the institution, in the long run, is in the interest of the institution.

A positive, mutually symbiotic relationship between campus and community opens a myriad of opportunities for the institution such as more prospective students in the area and more potential donors for campus projects. While community involvement holds a great deal of opportunity for the institution in its= entirety, community involvement also holds a plethora of opportunities for the individual student on campus. Faculty desiring administrative support need to recognize that experiential/collaborative learning projects will likely be assessed first, and foremost, by the degree to which they promote student learning. However, when choosing among various projects to support that all promote student learning, other factors can, and do, come into play.

Challenges and Limitations Collaborative/Experiential Learning for the Institution When colleges and

universities become involved in their surrounding communities they incur a certain amount of risk. That risk is heightened when community involvement is tied to the curriculum. When a student is learning in the community either through internships or the classroom both the institution and the community are liable for students' safety. There are also other potential problems such as who owns the product of student work for outside organizations. This problem has become more apparent with a series of recent crimes that involved the theft of intellectual property. Although these risks concern administrators, faculty members, and the organizations working with the college, the risk of these problems can be planned for and prevented in most cases through open dialogue. The remaining risk of other potential problems is relatively low. Another inherent risk of experiential learning is the risk that students may not perform up standards that the outside organization expects. In responding to these concerns, the VPAA stated that

> In thinking about that, let-s be clear that whatever challenges or risks we might identify are not showstoppers. They are just things that need to be taken into account when we go into an experiential learning situation. Anytime we go into an experiential learning situation there is a community partner who has a reason for making their site available and if the student or group of students we place into that situation do not meet expectations, there is a risk of disappointment in that partnership.

Experiential learning, just like any other deviation from established practice, offers challenges for the institution. At Muskingum College, these challenges are regarded as manageable. Unfortunately, there is no clear indication whether they are regarded this way at similar institutions. The organizational culture at Muskingum encourages a certain amount of well-planned risk-taking by faculty. Other institutions with different academic cultures may have different tolerances for risk. This being said, one predictor variable appears to be past performance. Administrators interviewed could not, offhand,

think of a major failure in collaborative/experiential learning at Muskingum College. Institutional memory suggests that the challenges and risks to experiential learning are most likely to be considered manageable if there is a track record for success and/or the administration is relatively untried.

The Role of Research in Small Liberal Arts Colleges Both administrators interviewed expressed a belief that faculty research should be appropriate to the institution. President Steele stated, "I think that faculty scholarship comes into their teaching. They have blended the two aspects . ... The student comes first, but there is not a dichotomy in their minds when viewing themselves as scholars and as teachers." The view that blending teaching and research is unique to liberal arts institutions may be in error. "At a major research institution, you will find many, many faculty B and it is a very different mission B but to the degree that the research is blended, it is at the doctoral and post-doctoral level. They are very focused on bringing new intellectual property into the world, and they are doing it with very advanced students. They are partnering with students, just not at the undergraduate level."

Just as research with graduate students on advanced topics may be appropriate for research institutions, research with undergraduate students on somewhat more methodologically simplistic topics is appropriate for liberal arts institutions. Research, to be meaningful, should contribute to the mission of the institution. For liberal arts colleges whose mission is weighted toward teaching students at the undergraduate level, experiential/collaborative learning experiences are appropriate research vehicles for faculty.

The VPAA further clarified this important point.

> It is a given that the primary mission of Muskingum College, a liberal arts college, is a teaching mission. We are asking this as how is and might research be an instrumentality for achieving that teaching mission. We have already closed the door to the idea that research stands as a mission independently or on par with teaching. Given that, the

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> outcome of teaching is student learning and then research comes in two directions. One, research comes in the sense that it involves students and faculty together to create experiential learning that is broader, deeper, more interdisciplinary and so research is part of the way in which we teach. Secondly, it is through research that we maintain a knowledge of current and emerging trends within facultyes respective fields which they can then bring into individual classes and the design of their curriculum.

Experiential/collaborative learning experiences that produce a tangible product are meaningful research efforts for faculty at liberal arts institutions. While the types of questions and the methodologies utilized may not be as advanced as one would find at a research institution, the results are no less important. At all colleges and universities, the goals of research are to share knowledge, answer questions, and enhance student learning. There is a place for experiential learning at all types of institutions but liberal arts colleges have missions which make them uniquely situated to produce undergraduate/faculty collaborative projects that serve as appropriate and meaningful expressions of research.

City Officials

The results referenced here are developed from interviews conducted with Zanesville city officials. Participants include Mayor John Fenton, Public Service Director Mike Sims, and Community Development Director Margaret Deedrick. The City of Zanesville is a charter city that has a strong mayor setup with a city council of nine persons: three at-large members and six members elected from ward districts. The city is situated approximately one hour east of Columbus, Ohio and 15 minutes west of Muskingum College on Interstate 70. According to the 2000 Census, the city has roughly 27,000 residents. Like many southeastern Ohio communities, Zanesville relied on the coal and pottery industry as a major source for employment and tax base. Since the 1950's those industries have been in a state

of decline, the city has felt the repercussions from those struggling industries in terms of residents and in turn tax base. As a result various areas of the city have fallen into various states of disrepair and the city is currently undertaking several initiatives in order to rehabilitate those areas with a special attention on the city=s once vibrant downtown district.

The City of Zanesville and Muskingum College=s Department of political science have had worked together both for the Regional Planning Course offered at the college and for a variety of other projects. The relationship was mutually sought after because of the willingness and ability of both parties to work together and pool resources. The city has full time employees, but like many municipalities it lacks adequate staff, money, and technical expertise to carry out all the projects they would like to complete. Both the college and the department of political science seek to give students the best education they can offer and real world experience is always in short order. The Mayor of Zanesville stated that "the college is a great supporter of the community and I think it is important to have students get practical experience." Margaret Deedrick added, "it is a win-win when looking at it. We get the extra staffing assistance, it feels like there is never enough, so that=s beneficial." It is through this cooperative effort that Muskingum College gains an outlet for experiential learning and the city gains staffing and access to technical assistance.

City officials were asked to identify challenges to involving students with city projects. One, according to Margaret Deedrick is "you are dealing with students and that is their primary job, being a student, so you are competing with a lot of different schedules, interests, and just being 18,19,20,21 years old and sometimes it is their first professional experience. Sometimes that can be a challenge." Mike Sims, Public Service Director, identified a second challenge. "If we are paying a large dollar

amount we probably do have a higher expectation. I can't expect the same quality from a second or third year [student] that I can expect from a consulting firm that has been in business for 30 years and has experts in the field." However Mike Sims goes on to say that "again, from my end with the mapping [refers to the redrawing of ward boundaries explained above] that you [Muskingum College students] were using state-of-the-art technology and it is the probably most accurate ward redistricting that has ever been done in Zanesville." Students who work with professionals can present the faculty overseeing the experience with problems. It is essential that the project undertaken be designed with student abilities in mind. Although the faculty member overseeing the project can, if necessary, step in and take over, doing so can dilute the learning experience. However, the limitations to what students are capable of doing is often more than offset by the advantages students do have, such as access to technology, access to expertise, and the willingness to work for free or at a nominal wage.

The benefits of this relationship are somewhat obvious. The city benefits from work comparable to that of a consulting firm at cost. These are projects the city would otherwise not be able to complete do to under-staffing or the lack of monetary or technological resources. Students gain the unique experience of working with city officials on actual problems that affect decision-making and policy. Students have a palpable result they can reference to future employers or graduate schools.

When discussing benefits to the city, all officials stressed the output. Improved city/college relations were barely mentioned. The view of the city officials is that benefits from the projects undertaken are in the final output. Faculty seeking to generate similar relationships with municipalities need to recognize that cities, while happy to maintain and/or improve relations with colleges, do not view that as a overwhelming concern when agreeing to fund student projects. While city officials (most

notably the mayor) did mention benefits to student learning, the emphasis was on the high quality of the final projects.

When undertaking projects, it is important for all parties involved to be aware that the role of the students is that of consultant. As such, there are certain types of projects that are more appropriate than others. When asked what types of projects, if any, are best suited for city-college collaborative efforts, the mayor said that it "seems to work best in the Community Development Department, which helps identify certain areas in our town that need to be worked on, like the Greenwood Avenue project. It is just a great way to help the city. We can't afford staff and with the internship program, we can get a lot done." Meg Deedrick added:

> Well, again, this wasn't my project but it seemed to work out ok. The city redistricting can be really political and projects of a political nature may be good ones to steer away from. Projects of an information gathering nature like the downtown survey are good ones to do because it gives valuable information, it is information that can be applied to a lot of different groups, and it tends not to be threatening or highly politicized. When you are dealing with redistricting, which again seemed to go very well, it could become highly politicized and possibly have fallout. ... I think information gathering is the most beneficial because it gives the student real world experience and it is important. Those types of projects are important, but often get weeded out by the urgent ones. It is something that is a luxury and we don't have the time or the staff to follow though. That's why I think the information gathering is a lot more valuable.

In short, the most valuable projects are those that are not politicized and/or are driven by information gathering. Students are less likely to have a negative experience with a less politicized project and cities are more likely to regard the experience as positive. In many cases, students are not residents of the city they will be working in on a project and therefore are not entirely sensitive to the local culture and concerns. Regardless of the type of project undertaken though, the benefits are real for all concerned. It does however require a fair amount of preplanning to ensure that experience is

beneficial for all concerned.

Students

The final set of interviewees was students who had previously taken the class. In large part, the intent of the questions asked of the students was to allow them to assess whether experiential/collaborative learning is a more effective pedagogy than other teaching techniques and what effect, if any, these sorts of experiences have on student measured across their entire student career?

As detailed in the methodology, students enrolled in the Regional Planning class spend five to six weeks reading a selection of texts concerning city governance and the problems cities face. As part of the interview, students were asked a series of questions regarding the value of the readings and which, if any, of the texts they might exclude or include to make the class a more useful experience. The answers to these questions suggest that the students were able to engage in active learning and move beyond the passive role that is sometimes exhibited in traditional classroom settings. Amongst those interviewed, the readings remained highly popular despite the greater than average workload for a 300 level class. One student said, "it was a huge reading load, it was one of the attractions to the course." Every student responded that the reading load was appropriate and one student in particular mentioned "if there had another (one more) book it may have been a little over the edge and excessive. But given the four books to read and how the schedule was setup, it was appropriate." While each student agreed that the amount of reading was sufficient, we asked each student if they felt that there were any texts they would substitute. Interestingly enough there seemed to be no emerging pattern to their responses. A student selected each of the four main texts once as a book they would like to see replaced with a similar text. This may reflect the varying tastes of each student. One student, after stating their own

opinion, conceded that all the books had their own value if not from the text directly but in that every text raised interesting questions for debate and the discussion of each text was valuable enough to warrant the inclusion of the text.

One anecdotal indicator of the impact a class has on student is whether they choose to keep the text from the course. While this is by no means a scientific or systematic measure of student perception of class importance, the authors argue that students who routinely sell books at the end of semester are more likely to keep those from classes they find at least nominally important to their education. However, this measure may be more appropriate in identifying classes that did not appeal to students. Students may keep books for a variety of reasons; class importance, the book has very little resalable value, they plan on selling it later, or they could use the book for reference in future academic pursuits. Every student interviewed kept their books with the exception of one who never purchased the books originally and borrowed them from the library. This student said "some of the books were interesting and I wish I could have bought and kept them." While this does not directly indicate student satisfaction or motivation, it does seem to suggest that all students who were interviewed found the course useful to their education.

Questions were asked to attempt to attain a realistic assessment of the class in comparison with other lecture, simulation, and discussion based classes students had taken. The responses indicate that while experiential/collaborative learning classes are positive learning experiences for students, they are best used as a supplement to more traditional teaching pedagogies. While most students agreed that they felt they learned more in the Regional Planning course than in traditional political science courses, many of them also felt that this would not have been true if they had not taken some lecture format

courses prior to the experiential learning class. In this respect we cannot draw a direct comparison between a lecture, simulation, and hands-on format course. While these sorts of experiences do provide positive learning for students, they are best used in conjunction with other more traditional classroom settings. The results suggest that departments that desire to incorporate these types of classes into their curriculum, should employ them as capstone experiences and/or for more advanced students who have already experienced a number of more traditional classes in the discipline.

Students were also asked if they felt any sense of personal achievement in the work that they had completed. While they all responded that yes, it did give them a sense of personal achievement, many found that the more important point was that it acted as capstone experience for them. While the class was not designed to serve as the capstone experience for majors, some, as a culmination of their college experience, saw it as one. Many students took the class very personally. For example, one student said, "my name was on it too. I didn't want to make all these maps and have Zanesville City Council say they didn't want any of them. I didn't want that to happen, so I gave them my best."

The sense of personal pride and responsibility students took in the course also lent itself to another related question. We asked if students were more willing to spend extra time above and beyond what they were called on to do for the course compared to other classes. All the students interviewed said that they were more willing to do work for the experiential learning class than for more traditional courses. The real-world aspect of the class appeared to play the greatest role in this. Students by and large said that their greater feeling of responsibility to complete work was based on a belief that they had promised the city work completed by a specific date and they had to follow through with it. The other students said that they were motivated, in part, by the fact that their name was going to be on a

final project for city officials to see and they did not want disappoint themselves or others.

Finally one student in particular summed up their perception of the course and its utility very succinctly.

> I felt they were very, very informative. It wasn't like any other information that you readily get in a political science class. It was completely different and I think that's why I enjoyed it so much. It was different because it was not talking about the same old political science stuff it was more specific and it dealt with things that we are more able relate with - from understanding rural strategies to suburban development. All these things were something a member of class can identify with. To read about the downfall of cities and decline of cities in America, I think each one of us can identify with those problems and we can readily see them within the cities nearby.

The interviews with students suggest that they enjoyed the class. Moreover, they were motivated to learn. This is suggestive of higher student learning. Motivation upon entrance is high, students feel a great deal of personal pride, responsibility to other students and the city, and due to small class size feel that there is a high degree of importance and significance to what they are doing. This results in students applying themselves to class work and performing above their norm. The hands-on experience portion of the class adds something personal to their experience, which also makes it a more memorable experience. The interviews suggest that this format, at least at Muskingum, has the potential to provide a more useful experience for the student than a lecture-based format class.

Implications

There were four groups of participants involved in this experiential learning model: administration, faculty, city officials, and students. The literature suggests and the interviews add supporting evidence to the proposition that there are two conditions that must be present in order to

take full advantage of a collaborative/experiential model of teaching: institutional support and development of a city or other outside party to partner with. If either of these elements is not present, this model of combining teaching, research, and service will not be likely to succeed. Institutional support is a necessary precondition for success. If the administration does not readily embrace experiential/collaborative experiences, success is unlikely. Institutional support is needed not only for permission to involve the college in binding agreements, but also in less direct ways. Likewise, without a city or other outside party to partner with, this model will not work. This aspect is not something that can be controlled for. Either there is a host city, within a reasonable distance, willing to allow students to assist them in projects or there is not. Again, if there were no outside party that will cooperate within a reasonable proximity of the college or university, the authors would suggest using a different paradigm to combine their research, service, and teaching agendas. We have observed that if the area in which the college or university is situated is affluent there is a lower demand for student help because the locality can afford to pay outside consultants and make use of other alternatives. A wealthy community does not necessarily negate the possibility of collaboration, but cities with more limited resources are more likely to take the fullest advantage of these partnerships. In lower income communities' financial resources and staffing are often in high demand, thus this type of locality is more willing to cooperate with colleges and universities. Even if the two preconditions are met, this model may still not work. While the universe of possible places this model may be applied may be greater than suggested, this research suggests that the following serve as tertiary necessities for success.

Prior City Partnering Experience

Partnering with a city can involve risks to student learning. If the city does not take the

experience seriously, or fails to provide adequate support, learning objectives can be compromised. These risks can be minimized if the city has experience partnering with educational institutions. Zanesville has had an ongoing internship program (both paid and unpaid) in place for some time. In the past, they employed students from a variety of area colleges including Muskingum Area Technical College (MATC), Ohio University Zanesville (OUZ), and Ohio University Athens. Several years ago, the author was able to strike a deal with the city to create six paid internship slots for Muskingum College students. In addition, the college sends a number of students to Zanesville for unpaid internships.

While the city continues to work with other colleges, Muskingum has taken on a more prominent role. The experiential learning class that works on a city project was begun after the internship arrangement was forged. Relations with the city are kept current in a number of ways. Along with the normal networking that occurs between citys and colleges, public servants such as Associate Planning Director Robert Hewitt have been tapped as resources. Invited to speak in introductory level courses such as State and Local Politics on topics that concern local governments and the processes city must undertake in order to carry out what is considered the everyday functions of a city, these ties help keep the college and city close.

Constant and open communication between the college and the host city is essential for success. The city needs to perceive that when they work with a group of students they are not going it alone. City officials must be made continually aware that students are being advised and supported by the faculty and the college. In the case that a problem arises they need to know they have the support of the college. The interview transcripts revealed that there is an important difference between the projects

involving Muskingum College versus those involving other institutions. Muskingum College=s high level of involvement has made that internship program more effective and useful to the city and to the students who participated in it.

Proper Preparation

While virtually all agree that proper preparation is essential to undertaking a project, it appears that effectively communicating it is as well. The readings the students complete before undertaking a project for the city must give them the proper level of expertise to make them effective. Without expertise, the college loses the main commodity they can offer the locality. Without something to offer the locality the possibility of collaboration decreases. Therefore the more degrees of separation you can create for the cities to use students opposed to the alternative the more likely and beneficial the relationship can be for both parties.

All parties involved in the process need to be informed of this. City officials want to know what preparations students are taking before coming to the city to begin work. Generally, city officials want to see the course syllabus and are interested in the books and articles students will read. Similarly, students who sign up for experiential learning classes are, by and large, concerned whether they will be able to handle the experience. They appreciate the preparation so long as they are made aware, at the onset, why they are reading the assignments. This tends to reduce anxiety and encourages the later application of what was read to what actually occurred.

Build From the Ground Up

Cities, especially financially strapped ones, get tremendous benefits from having projects completed at a fraction of the cost of an outside consulting firm. However, without a track record, cities

are less likely to want to risk limited resources on students. Prior experience allows the city more accurate forecasting of future results. Starting small is a good rule of thumb. Early projects serve to establish the relationship. Once a small project has been successfully completed the relationship has been established and proven beneficial for both parties, expanded opportunities can be considered. This is also beneficial for the faculty member. If little is known about the inner workings of a local government, a small project can allow assessment of future opportunities without binding the faculty member to an overly burdensome commitment.

Related to the above, early projects should involve students who are carefully selected. One reason for the success of the collaboration between the city of Zanesville and the Department of political science at Muskingum College has been the overall high caliber of students involved in the projects. Cities need to be ensured that providing quality students is a priority in the relationship. Quality students will also increase what the students can be involved in, the higher degree of competence a student possesses the more valuable the student is to the city and in turn the more likely the student will be assigned to a meaning task. This does not however mean that there should be a minimum GPA cutoff or the like. Rather, it is important that the city recognize that the students involved are committed to the project.

Students

Some students said in the interviews that they were attracted to the class because they felt it would challenge them intellectually. Furthermore every student that has taken this class is either a political science major or minor. It is reasonable to assume from the nature of the class, their backgrounds in political science, and their statements during interviews that the students who took this

experiential/collaborative learning class possessed a high degree of motivation to succeed in this course. Since we did not measure the motivation of students prior to taking the class it is impossible to judge whether the students, were all motivated to learn or whether students were motivated and energized by the course. Wilbert McKeachie argues that students will assess "the potential rewards and punishments and their probabilities of attainment in all of these situations."

The data gathered does not allow an answer to this question. We do however know that student enthusiasm and motivation is affected by teacher motivation and vice versa. With a high degree of motivation it is easier to push students to learn more and work harder which may equate to higher learning. Collaboration between faculty and students also appears to promote a higher degree of student learning. The reading portion of the course uses a discussion format where students are required to lead class discussion. The success of this format for this class can be attributed, in part, to the small class size, the class being an elective (opposed to a requirement), a relaxed classroom environment, required collaboration among students, and the salience of the topic, local government to the upcoming project. Collaboration can be an illusive concept. Collaborative learning has six main attributes according to Gerlach (1994). Those attributes are organized into sequential order.

> They order as follows: 1. Allow time for group consensus, 2. Students are asked to complete specific tasks within a given amount of time, 3. They allow members of the group to negotiate individual rules, 4. They encourage group consensus but teach respect for individual diversity and minority views, 5. They allow students and teacher to collaborate once a group consensus has been reached, 6. They ask both teacher and student to evaluate the collaborative process as having been effective or ineffective. (12)

The rubric for collaboration that Gerlach developed can be considered in the assessment of the Regional Planning course offered at Muskingum College. This course meets, to varying degrees, all six

requirements. Students are given a list of projects the city wants completed and vote on which project they wish to work on with the city of Zanesville. Projects are completed as a group of students with the professor acting as advisor for the group. Students negotiate meeting times and time tables for completion, of course time tables do have parameters but student have input as to how quickly they can complete the project. Students are also asked to complete readings in a specific amount of time which is not negotiable unless there is due cause to cancel the class for that meeting time. At the end of each semester student are asked what the most helpful and least helpful aspects of the course are and students are asked to participate in traditional class evaluations as well.

In summary student learning appears to have increased for several reasons: higher motivation, experiential learning, collaboration, and a heightened perception of the importance of the material being covered. Through the identification of the essential elements in the Regional Planning course the study of similar class structures can be measured in more depth and assessed for accuracy. While we have identified what appear to be the major elements and variables involved in this learning process we readily accept that comparative work needs to be completed by other faculty to validate these results.

Conclusion

This paper provides a model through which educators can not only meet their research, service, and teaching agendas, but also provide invaluable experience for undergraduates in the role of active consultants to a political and/or administrative entity. However this model is not one-size-fits-all. To be successfully applied elsewhere, several conditions must be met. Institutional support and a city or outside entity to work with are essential preconditions for attaining the sought after learning objectives.

Additionally, the degree of success a particular faculty member will experience is influenced by prior city partnering experience, adequate student preparation, building from small projects to more advanced ones, and student motivation. It is likely that not all institutions will have only have a few of the ingredients needed in order to replicate this course. Moreover, even if all conditions were met, the authors would suggest adapting the model to your institution rather than adopting it.

The utility of this sort of class lies not only in its structure but the subject matter. Today, as in the past, talk about the government is as common as the weather. College is a crucial point for students to explore and begin to question their political ideology. However most students lack detailed information of what government does, and in particular what local government does on a daily basis. In classes like these, the mystery of local government is demystified and students are given the opportunity to participate with local governments in a positive, meaningful fashion. Interviews with students who graduated since taking the class suggest that the experience leaves a positive impression on them beyond their college career and helps shape their feelings toward governance and democracy. Regardless of whether students go on to be political scientists, public servants, or simply active citizens, they can enhance and enrich their knowledge of government so they may participate and make their government a more effective democracy.

Appendix A - Interview Questions for Regional Planning Students

1. Gender Male ____ Female ____
2. What was your class status when taking Regional Planning? _____
3. What semester/project did you work on?
4. Do you plan to pursue education beyond your Bachelors Degree? (e.g. Masters degree, PhD, Jurist Doctorate, MBA, etc)?
5. Were you a Political Science major or minor before taking this class?
6. Did you change/add a major or minor in Political Science after taking this class?
7. Did you think there was appropriate amount of reading? Explain.
8. Did you think *Inside Game/Outside Game* by David Rusk is an appropriate text to begin the Regional Planning course with?
9. Did you feel other in-class readings were informative?
10. Did you feel class readings useful with in-class projects? Did you feel amply prepared by the readings to work with city officials?
11. Did you find in-class readings useful in other classes outside of Regional Planning? If so, explain.
12. If you plan to go to graduate school, do you think in-class readings were helpful in preparing you for graduate school?
13. What comments, if any, do you have about class readings, or any of the texts?
14. What in-class texts, if any, would you add/drop from the reading list? Explain.
15. Did you keep the books from this course? Do you normally keep books? Explain.
16. Do you feel that you learn more or less from a hands-on project or practical experience, such as an internship, than you would in a lecture or simulation course?
17. What did you initially hope to gain from this class?
18. Do feel this course meet your expectations in terms of what you hoped to gain from it? Explain.
19. Were there any unexpected gains or experiences during this class?
20. Have you had other hands-on courses before or since? If so, how does this class compare?
21. Did Regional Planning offer an appropriate amount of course credits for the amount of work involved? Why?
22. In contrast with other courses of similar amount of credit and course level, did Regional Planning require a different type of work?
23. Would you say you are more willing or less to dedicate extra time to this class over others?

24. Do you feel the project completed in class had utility outside of learning, in other words do you feel the project was helpful to you?
25. Do you feel the project completed in class had utility outside of learning, in other words do you feel the project was helpful to others (i.e. city officials or citizens)?
26. Do you feel that the project produced by this course was completed with a level of professionalism appropriate for working with local government?
27. Do you feel this class did or did not help in increasing your confidence working in a professional setting?
28. Did this class give you any sense of accomplishment or personal achievement beyond that of any other course?
29. Did you talk about this course with your friends or family?
30. Would you recommend this class to others? Why?

Appendix B - Interview Questions for City Administrators

1. In your experience as Mayor, what made you decide to work with Muskingum College?
2. From the perspective of Mayor, what benefits, if any, does the City receive from working with Muskingum College that makes the relationship worthwhile?
3. From the perspective of the Mayor, are there any challenges, drawbacks, or negative aspects to allowing Muskingum College complete projects for the City of Zanesville?
4. From the perspective of the Mayor, do you think students were adequately prepared to assist the city with projects undertook in the past.
5. From you perspective as Mayor, what type of projects, if any, are best suited for city-college collaborative projects?
6. From your perspective, how do projects completed by Muskingum College students compare to those completed by the city or other contractors held by the city?
7. In your experience as Mayor, do you feel that projects produced in the past, such as the downtown survey and redistricting, were completed with a level of professionalism appropriate for working with local government?
8. From the perspective of the Mayor, do you feel that the projects (downtown survey and redistricting) produced by Muskingum College students have been useful to Zanesville?
9. From the perspective of Mayor, does allowing Muskingum College to assist the city with projects for the City of Zanesville offer any advantages?
10. In your experience as Mayor, what aspects do these projects such as these make it a beneficial, valuable learning experience for Muskingum College students?
11. In your experience as Mayor, has the city collaborated with other colleges on city projects? If so, could you briefly describe and compare them to the projects involving Muskingum College.
12. From the perspective of Mayor, do you think that allowing students to work with the city has helped build a positive relationship between the City and College?
13. From the your perspective as a public servant, do you think that students that after participating in college-city collaborative projects or internships have a stronger sense of civic duty or engagement?
14. If a mayor or city official approached you from another town or city interested in starting a similar program in their municipality, what advice would you give them?
15. From the perspective of Mayor, what factors need to be present in order for the projects to be successful? What, if anything do they need to avoid?

16.From the perspective of Mayor, do you have suggestions on how to improve the program Zanesville and Muskingum College share?
17. In the perspective of the Mayor, based on the results of previous projects do you think the City is more or less likely to deal with Muskingum College in the future? Do you foresee the city looking for city-college collaborative projects in areas other than Political Science, such as GIS intern from the Geology Department?
18. In your experience as Mayor, do you think the collaborative projects between the College and City have improved the relationship between the College and Zanesville community?

Appendix C - Interview Questions for College Administrators

1. The Regional Planning/Metro politics course offered each semester in the Department of political science attempts to provide students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world problems employing a collaborative/experiential learning approach. Do you know of any other courses that offer collaborative/experiential-learning experiences at Muskingum College? If so, how do they compare with this course?
2. From the perspective of the administration, where do you see collaborative/experiential learning fitting into Muskingum College's future curricula? Do you envision more, the same, or less collaborative/experiential learning courses offered in the future?
3. From an administrative perspective, what benefits (if any) do you see these courses offering for Muskingum College as an institution?
4. From an administrative perspective, what benefits (if any) do you see these courses offering for perspective, current, and past Muskingum College students?
5. From an administrative perspective, what challenges, drawbacks, or negative aspects do you see these types of courses having for Muskingum College as an institution?
6. From an administrative perspective, what challenges, drawbacks, or negative aspects do you see these types of courses having for perspective, current, and past Muskingum College students?
7. How, if at all, do you see collaborative/experiential learning contributing to the overall mission of Muskingum College?
8. Traditionally, colleges with a liberal arts mission set themselves apart from other institutions with a pronounced emphasis on teaching. From an administrative perspective, how do you see research helping to fulfill and enhance the mission of liberal arts colleges?
9. How, if at all, should research at Muskingum College differ from that of other similarly sized liberal arts colleges?
10. Colleges, in our view correctly, emphasize the need to serve the needs of both the students on the campus and the community at large. How, if at all, do collaborative/experiential learning courses help fulfill this important institutional function?
11. From the perspective of the administration, how, if at all do collaborative/experiential-learning courses such as Regional Planning helps the college build and maintain a positive community relationship

and/or image?
12. From the view of the administration, what is the role of the institution in instilling a sense of civic duty in the student population? How, if at all, do collaborative/experiential-learning courses that allow students to solve community problems help fulfill this function?
13. In your view, how much emphasis should faculty teaching at a liberal arts college devote to research?
14. From the perspective of the administration, is there any specific mix of traditional and collaborative research that would be ideal or preferred?
15. Your continued support of student/faculty collaborative learning is greatly appreciated. Meeting with students and faculty to discuss their research, providing funding for student research through the Muskingum College Summer Fellows Program, and providing opportunities for students to present their findings to senior level staff and the Board of Trustees are all well known. Are there other ways we may be unaware of that you have helped promote student-faculty collaborative research?

16. Have you taken part or seen similar efforts to introduce and maintain student-faulty collaborative/experiential learning at other institutions? If so, could you please describe and compare them to your experiences in this area at Muskingum College.
17. Hypothetically, if another administrator from a similar institution approached you explaining that they had proposals for a similar program what would you advise them to do? (In other words, in your view, can the collaborative/experiential learning experiences at Muskingum College be transplanted to other liberal arts institutions.) What advice could you offer regarding implementation of such a program? In your view, how essential is leadership from the administration?
18. What previous institutions have you worked for and in what capacity (e.g., Administration, Faculty)?
19. Have the institutions you have previously been affiliated with promote collaborative/experiential learning courses? If so, how?
20. From the perspective of the administration, are these types of classes a positive, valuable learning experience for students?
21. From the perspective of the administration, how do these classes fit into the research and service commitments of faculty members?

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